



PO Box 97
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www.isleroyale.org

Newsletter Winter/Spring 2016

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A newsletter to inform the members of ongoing activities within the Isle Royale Boater's Association, promote discussion among its members on various IRBA issues and share members' experiences related to boating, sport fishing, hiking, canoeing, and kayaking.

IRBA Update by Dave Hand

With the start of an El NINO winter, I was wondering if I should have winterized my boat this year; but mother nature came through at the end of December to provide for a healthy winter. Hope all of our members, especially those on the north end of the lake, are keeping warm this year. The ice buildup on the Keweenaw Peninsula has been minimal this year. Maybe Lake Superior will be a few degrees warmer this upcoming boating season.

This past year we had our usual two very successful events: the West-End fund raiser in June held at the Clearwater Grill and Event Center just north of Duluth; and the Isle Royale Fishing Tournament and Fish Fry held at the Johnson Pavilion at Windigo. These events are a lot of fun and I strongly encourage you to make an effort to attend these events this year.

In a recent meeting with Phyllis Green, she mentioned that the NPS would probably be removing Siskiwit dock and break wall. The Siskiwit Bay EA will be published soon and the IR planning page is

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/parkHome.cfm?parkID=140>. We need to take a close look at this potential loss in dock space and boater access to that part of IR. Boaters do not have much access to that area of the island as it is. At our February IRBA meeting, several local members voiced their opposition to the Siskiwit dock removal and mentioned that many Minnesota boaters also use this dock facility. Please let me know your opinion on the potential removal of the Siskiwit dock (dwhand@mtu.edu). I mentioned the law suit ruling related to equivalent dock space for boaters; and Phyllis said there is currently more dock space for boaters since the construction of the finger docks at Windigo. She also mentioned that in the near future boaters would have overnight access to Wright's Island dock. However, that dock can probably accommodate one boat and not several boats like the Siskiwit dock. I am thinking that the judge's intention of equivalent dock space also relates to dock location? I would like the west end to discuss this at their next meeting and let me know member opinions on this matter. We will discuss this at our next meeting in April and at the Annual May meeting.

Boater access and safe harbor on IR is important and should be protected.

Another blow to IRBA was NPS decision to not grant IRBA's proposal for construction of a floating dock at Passage Island (See the NPS update in this newsletter). This is also worth discussing at the next meeting.

IRBA Helps NPS Fix Windigo Docks by Dave Miller

Our first trip out to Windigo in May 2015 found some of the new finger docks which installed a few years back were in disrepair. Apparently, the tee dock was in a sad state. The crib had settled to the deep side on the East end and that caused the West end of the dock to lift, separating the top of the crib from the bottom at the waterline. It was very difficult to see what had happened without removing some of the dock planks and first thoughts were that the repair would need the barge/crane. The logistics of getting the barge to Windigo before the Isle Royale Boaters Association meeting in July much less for the entire summer were not looking good.

I took some pictures of what I could see and talked with Mark Rude when I got back to Duluth. My thoughts were that it might be possible to jack up the dock and get it back to level without the crane. After talking with Randy Rastello he agreed to travel to Windigo to look at the project. We decided that it was worth a try and Randy offered to supply the materials and provide some NPS help.

On the Tuesday morning before the IRBA Windigo meeting five of us met at the dock. Me, my son Scott, Charlie Townsend, Ernie Haataja NPS and Gary Hoenig NPS. Planks were removed, the entire dock top was jacked up to level, 1" pins were cut off by hand under water

(Thanks Scott, Charlie and Steve Martin), Jay Green arrived, rocks were pried from between the cribbing beams and beams were inserted. We worked from early morning until well past dinner for two days getting the dock ready to put the planks back on. Thursday morning we were ready to put the finger docks on the "T". Mark and Noah Kinnunen arrived at just the right time and with their help the fingers were attached. Just as Scott and I were leaving to head back to Duluth for work Archie Abrahamson arrived with the last minute parts and boats were moving over to the dock. We did it!

My heartfelt thanks goes out to all that helped. Scott, Charlie, Jay, Ernie and Gary were all part of a team and it was a great team! Thank you to the NPS for all of the materials and support we were given. Thank you to Archie for all the last minute help sourcing and providing the parts we needed. Thank you all! Dave Miller

NPS Update by Phyllis Green

Isle Royale is gearing up for the Centennial year with Find Your Park library programs, Island Insider newspaper, Every Kid in the Parks school programs. In addition, a new interactive cultural resources website will be launched soon. We are also developing a series of podcasts. The first in the series will come out this summer. We are in the process of hiring the Houghton supervisory park ranger and were fortunate to add a winter seasonal in the Houghton visitor center.

New personnel at the Park. The park welcomes Coral Conway as the new Chief of Law Enforcement from El Malpais National Monument in New Mexico. Coral had a short stint at Isle Royale early in her career as an interpreter at Windigo and is pleased to return after a circle

through Alaska and the Southwest. We have hired a new tug barge Captain Mike Bolinger which should allow us to bring back logged dock projects back on line. Captain Hanrahan of the Ranger III retired after over 21 years of service and we are currently looking for a new captain. Paul Brown, the Chief of Natural resources, has moved onto a job with the Fish and Wildlife Service in Hawaii. Justin Peltz will be a new face around the Houghton Admin site as he has taken on our purchasing and property management.

Isle Royale continues to plan for the future. Planning efforts for cultural resources, wilderness, and moose and wolves are currently in progress. Drafts of the plans will be available online for review and comment. Public comments are a critical part of the planning process and we appreciate your continued interest in the future of Isle Royale National Park. Newsletters, updates, participation opportunities, and other information related to these plans can be found at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/ISRO>.

Planning at a park level included a review of the Siskiwet dock situation and the IRBA request for a floating dock at Passage Island. Siskiwet EA can be found on-line at this link, <https://pepc.nps.gov/projectHome.cfm?projectId=45972>. The alternatives for review range from no action to replacement to removal with a mooring buoy.

For Passage Island after completing the underwater survey work where we found two small wrecks; the park developed six options which are presented in the general notes section including a No Action alternative. With the exception of the No Action, each alternative would have some influence on the number of visitors using the Passage Island Lighthouse Trail and also the privy found near the cove. Since overnight use is not permitted on Passage

Island, the park evaluated whether such use is desirable considering potential impacts to natural and cultural resources and current use of boater support infrastructure on the Island. The six options are listed below.

Alternative 1: No Action

Alternative 2: 30'x30' floating dock attached to nearby cliff wall via pivoting metal struts

Alternative 3: Overnight use of existing dock at USCG boathouse

Alternative 4: Single mooring buoy via anchor chain

Alternative 5: 30'x30' free-floating dock anchored by concrete weights via anchor chain

Alternative 6: 30'x30' floating dock attached to current USCG dock/boathouse via pivoting walkway planks

NPS has noted boaters use passage Island to access the trail system or anchor out allowing access to this remote site with minimal impacts. In addition, Sandy tours allow non-boaters an opportunity to visit this remote site. Passage Island is an ecologically sensitive area. Increasing infrastructure would likely increase use, followed by increased visitor impact on this area. If one of the reasons for pursuing this project is to provide overnight camping options for boaters closer to productive fishing grounds, it would also follow that adding infrastructure here would likely increase fishing pressure in this area. With a backlog of maintenance, and reduced patrol staff, adding infrastructure increases responsibilities, rather than engineering out workloads. This is contrary to current NPS direction to stabilize or reduce infrastructure footprints at parks.

Thus the Park will be proceeding with the no action alternative, leave things the way they presently are.

Projects that might interest boaters to work with the park could range from restoration of a turn-of-the-century fishing boat: working with the newly formed Rock of Ages Lighthouse Association to stabilize and/or replace the current dock so restoration and maintenance on the project can begin. The Association Director, David Gerth, would probably appreciate advice or leads on work boat options for performing such work. He can be reached at: Rock Of Ages Lighthouse <rockofageslps@gmail.com>.

The Park is open to suggestions from IRBA on options for joint projects.

Annual IRBA Isle Royale Trout Fishing Tournament Results - by Dave Hand

The 13th Annual IRBA Trout Fishing Tournament was held at Windigo. Our two-day event began sunrise on Friday, July 17, with weigh-in at 5:00 PM and sunrise on Saturday, July 18, with weigh-in at 2:00 PM. Each boat was allowed to enter the three largest fish by weight. Many thanks to fishermen who donated their fish to the IRBA Fish Fry after the awards presentation held at Rock Harbor.

Plaques were given to three boats with the highest total weight. The Dwane "Bear" Falconer largest fish award was also given to the individual with the largest fish by weight taken in the tournament. In addition, the "Wooden Herring Award" travel trophy was also up for grabs by either the Minnesota or Michigan fishermen for the three largest fish by weight.

This year's event was just as big as previous events with many fishermen entered in the contest. The big winner this year was the 'Barbara Jean' (Joe Mecklin, Matt Mecklin, & Mike Cardinal). Their three largest fish totaling a whopping 72 lbs 7 oz. Congratulations! They also caught several more lakers in the 15+ lb

category that were donated to the fish fry - thanks guys.

The 'Fish Nautzi' (Bill Bailey, Ron Bailey, Kent Hoffman, & Willie Werner), placed second in the tourney with a total weight of 43 lbs. 6 oz. Nice Job Guys!



The First Place Barbara Jean Crew



The Second Place Fish Nautzi Crew.

The third place spot went to 'Northeastern II' (Archie Abrahamson, Brian Chandler, & Jason Syett) with their three largest fish weighing a total of 41 lbs 12 oz. just less than two pounds from second place. Nice Job Guys!



The Third Place Northeastern II Crew.

The Dwane "Bear" Falconer largest fish honors went to Matt Mecklin fishing on the 'Barbara Jean' weighing in at 27 lbs 14 oz. Nice fish Matt!

The Minnesota fishermen kicked some butt this year and took home the coveted Wooden Herring Award with a total weight of Fishermen with a total weight of 74 lbs 11 oz. Congratulations to the Minnesota Fishermen as they have exxxxtennnnndedddddd their lead in the number of Wooden Herring Awards over the Michigan Fishermen.



Matt Mecklin with the Largest Fish



The Minnesota Fishermen with the Wooden Herring Award

The Annual Island Meeting Fish Fry

The annual island meeting and fish fry is always a nice time. This year's event was attended by about over 100 hungry participants. Big thanks to all the people involved in making this a very successful event. Many thanks go out to the fish cleaning crew who for the past several years have cleaned and prepared many pounds of fish. IRBA appreciates all those who participated in the fishing event, donated fish, and helped with the fish fry. Great Fun had by all.

IRBA Annual Membership Dues

If you're not sure about membership dues, please take a look at the mailing address on this newsletter. Underneath your name there is a line that shows 'Dues paid '15 '16 '17 Lifetime" your dues for 2016. If there is a check mark in the 15, 16, 17 or lifetime your dues are paid up. If there is not a check mark, you will need to pay your dues for this year. A donation is always appreciated! There is a membership form attached to the newsletter if you need it. If not, then pass it on to someone you may know that would be interested in joining.

IRBA Scheduled Events

IRBA Meeting Wednesday, April 13, 2016, 7PM,
at the Range Snowmobile Club, South Range, MI.

IRBA Annual Dinner Meeting - Saturday, May 14,
2016, at the Ramada Inn in Hancock, MI.
Beverages will be served from 5:00 - 6:00 PM
followed by a dinner buffet at 6:00. Cost is
about \$29.00 per person. Please RSVP by
sending Dave Hand an email (dwhand@mtu.edu)

with the number in your party or by phone at
(906) 370 - 7354.

West End Fund Raiser, Thursday, June 16, 2016,
5 PM, at the Clearwater Grill and Event Center,
Duluth, MN.

IRBA Fishing Tournament - Friday, July 15,
2016, and Saturday, July 16, 2016, at Rock
Harbor, IR. Meeting July 16, 2016, 5 PM,
followed by the fish fry.

Isle Royale Boaters Association

Founded June 5, 1996

www.Isleroyale.org

Our mission is to educate, represent, and promote the interest of power and sail boaters, sport fishermen, canoeists, kayakers, backpackers, and all visitors of Isle Royale National Park. Membership is open to all interested people.

Renewal Membership ____ New Membership ____

Dues: (Check one)

____ 1 Year Family Membership ... \$ 35

____ 3 Year Family Membership ... \$ 90

____ Life Family Membership \$ 500

Additional contribution to support the IRBA mission:

\$ 25 __ \$50 __ \$100 __ \$ _____ Other

Name: _____

Spouse: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____ Work Phone: _____ Fax: _____

How do you enjoy Isle Royale?

Power ____ Sail ____ Paddle ____ Hiker ____ Lodge ____

Name of boat: _____

Please print this form and mail it with your payment to:

Isle Royale Boaters Association

PO Box 97

Houghton, MI 49931

Contributions and dues paid to the Isle Royale Boaters Association, a tax-exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, are deductible for computing income and estate taxes.